



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: October 2024
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At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, our mission is to provide an inclusive and enriching education that nurtures the spiritual, moral, intellectual and social development of every child. Grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ, we aim to instil Gospel values and foster a strong relationship with God, preparing our children to live as responsible citizens in the wider world. Religious Education (RE) is at the heart of our school's curriculum and ethos, ensuring that the Catholic faith permeates every aspect of school life.

Aims of Religious Education:

At St Joseph's, our Religious Education curriculum aims to:

- Nurture a personal relationship with God through prayer, reflection, and understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Develop a deep knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, its sacraments, and the liturgical life of the Church.
- Promote respect, tolerance, and understanding of different faiths and cultures, following the teachings of Jesus Christ to "love one another".
- Enable children to reflect on and respond to and action their experience of faith in their daily lives.
- Equip children with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to participate fully in the Catholic life of the school, parish, and community.
- Foster an environment where Gospel values are lived and celebrated, embedding these values within every area of school life.

Rationale for Religious Education:

The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales emphasise that Religious Education is "the core of the core curriculum" in a Catholic school. At St Joseph's, we follow this guidance, ensuring that Religious Education is treated with the same academic rigour as any other core subject, reflecting its pivotal role in shaping the moral and spiritual formation of our pupils. We aim for RE to engage both the heart and the mind, leading to a deeper relationship with God and an understanding of how the Catholic faith guides our actions and interactions with others.

Curriculum Overview:

At St Joseph's, we use the 'Come and See' Religious Education programme as our primary scheme for delivering the RE curriculum. This programme is supported by the Diocese of Westminster and reflects the Church's mission of evangelisation. The 'Come and See' scheme:

- Provides opportunities for children to explore the mysteries of faith through Scripture, Tradition, and the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Ensures that children develop a thorough understanding of the Liturgical Year, Sacraments, and core Catholic beliefs.
- Encourages children to respond to God's call in their lives through prayer, reflection, and action.

- Promotes a deep understanding of Gospel values and helps children apply these values to everyday life.

Religious Education Directory (RED):

In line with the new Religious Education Directory (RED) issued by the Bishops of England and Wales, St Joseph's will ensure that our RE curriculum remains faithful to Church teaching while also responding to contemporary challenges. The RED outlines the following key areas, which are transitioning towards compliance (by September 2026):

- **Content and Structure:** Ensuring that our RE curriculum covers key theological concepts, the life of Christ, the history of salvation, and the sacramental life of the Church.
- **Formation in Faith:** Fostering a deeper relationship with God and the Church through spiritual and intellectual formation.
- **Dialogue with Other Faiths:** Promoting respect and dialogue with people of other faith traditions, preparing children to be witnesses of faith in a diverse and multi-religious society.
- **Engaging with Scripture:** Ensuring that children have a deep engagement with Sacred Scripture and Tradition, recognising these as foundational to Catholic teaching.
- **Sacramental Preparation:** Integrating sacramental preparation, particularly for First Holy Communion and Reconciliation, into the life of the school.
- **As we implement the new Religious Education Directory,** our staff will receive ongoing professional development and support from the Diocese to ensure that our teaching remains aligned with current Church guidance.

Teaching and Learning:

At St Joseph's, we ensure that Religious Education is taught with creativity, enthusiasm, and intellectual depth. RE lessons are structured to promote:

- **Knowledge and Understanding:** Pupils develop a deep understanding of key concepts of faith and how these apply to their lives.
- **Critical Thinking:** Encouraging children to ask and explore profound questions about life, existence, and morality.
- **Reflection and Prayer:** Opportunities for prayer and quiet reflection are integral to RE lessons.
- **Cross-Curricular Links:** Making connections between RE and other subjects through our Catholic Social Teaching lessons and embedded Catholic Link lessons.

Time Allocation:

We allocate 10% of our curriculum time to Religious Education, as directed by the Bishops of England and Wales. This includes both formal teaching and time for prayer, reflection, and liturgical celebrations.

Worship and Prayer Life:

Prayer and worship are central to the life of St Joseph's, and our RE programme complements the rich liturgical life of the school. Children participate in daily prayer, weekly assemblies, pupil-led Celebration of the Word and Masses throughout the Liturgical Year, including key celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, and Holy Days of Obligation. We work closely with our local parish to support the sacramental development of our children and foster a strong connection between the school and parish communities.

Assessment and Monitoring:

Religious Education is assessed regularly using both formative and summative approaches, in line with diocesan guidelines. Teachers assess children's progress in understanding, knowledge, and spiritual development through:

- Classroom Observations: Monitoring engagement and participation in RE lessons.
- Pupil Work: Reviewing written work, creative responses, and verbal contributions.
- Pupil Reflection: Encouraging self-reflection on learning and personal faith.
- Formal Assessment: Using diocesan assessment guidelines to measure knowledge and understanding of RE topics.

The RE subject leader monitors the effectiveness of teaching and learning across the school, ensuring that staff are well-supported and children make strong progress.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities:

At St Joseph's, Religious Education is inclusive and accessible to all children, regardless of their faith background. We respect and celebrate diversity while maintaining our Catholic identity, ensuring that every child feels valued and included in our RE curriculum. Pupils from other faith traditions are encouraged to share their experiences and perspectives, enriching the learning of all.

Staff Development:

We are committed to ensuring that all staff receive high-quality professional development in Religious Education. Teachers are provided with regular training, both in-school and through diocesan courses, to support their understanding of the RE curriculum and ensure that teaching is informed by the latest Church guidance.

Partnership with Parents and the Parish:

We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children in faith. At St Joseph's, we work in partnership with parents and the local parish to support children's spiritual development. We encourage parents to engage with the RE curriculum including our Catholic Social Teaching and participate in school Masses, liturgies, and religious celebrations. Regular communication with parents ensures that they are informed and involved in their child's faith journey.

Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education

At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Religious Education (RE) plays a central role in our curriculum, reflecting the importance of faith in the holistic development of each child. RE is a core subject within Catholic schools and is deeply embedded in our ethos, fostering spiritual, moral, and intellectual growth. However, we also respect the rights of parents and guardians to make decisions regarding their child's participation in RE.

Under the 1988 Education Reform Act, parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from all or part of Religious Education lessons and/or collective worship. At St Joseph's, we strive to ensure that all children feel included and benefit from our inclusive RE curriculum, which is rooted in Gospel values, respect, and understanding for different beliefs and cultures. Nevertheless, we understand that some parents, particularly those of other faiths or no faith, may wish to exercise this right.

Procedure for Withdrawal: If parents wish to withdraw their child from aspects of the RE curriculum, we ask that they:

- Submit a written request to the Headteacher stating their wish to withdraw and the reasons for their decision.
- Meet with the Headteacher to discuss the nature of the RE curriculum, as well as any alternative arrangements that may be made for their child during RE lessons.
- While we respect the decision of parents who choose to withdraw their child, we encourage an open dialogue to ensure that parents are fully informed about the content and nature of our Religious Education programme. Our RE curriculum is designed to be inclusive and to provide children with a broad understanding of moral, spiritual, and cultural issues, which can benefit pupils regardless of their personal faith.

Alternative Provision: In the case of a withdrawal, alternative arrangements will be made during RE lessons or acts of worship. However, we do not offer a separate curriculum during this time. The child may be supervised by another member of staff and given independent work or activities to engage with.

We are committed to fostering an environment of inclusivity, respect, and understanding, and we view RE as a valuable opportunity for all children to learn about the Catholic faith and the wider religious traditions of the world. However, we will always respect the wishes of parents in this matter.

Policy Review:

This Religious Education Policy will be reviewed annually by the RE subject leader, Headteacher, and the Governing Body to ensure it remains aligned with Diocesan guidance and continues to meet the spiritual needs of our school community.